



## Our Focus

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program, as part of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs utilize agents and assistants to provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

## Our Challenge

### Poverty

According to US Census estimates for 2017, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$48,332**, almost 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$60,336**.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky also has higher percentages of poverty and food insecurity among its population compared to census estimate for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
<b>Total Poverty</b>	17.1%	13.4%
<b>Child Poverty</b>	22.1%	18.4%
<b>Food Insecurity</b>	14.7%	12.3%

In 2017, an estimated **12,545** Christian County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **5,093** were children under 18.<sup>1</sup>

### Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet and physical inactivity.<sup>2</sup> These include high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke.



In 2017, the percentage of obese adults in Kentucky was **34.3%**, ranking it in the top 10 states for highest obesity rates in the country. The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians was **34.4%**, ranking it as the most physically inactive state in the nation. Kentucky was also ranked in the top 10 for high percentages of adults with diabetes (**12.9%**) and adults with hypertension (**39.4%**).<sup>3</sup> A large body of evidence shows that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout life.<sup>2</sup>

In 2015, **34.2%** of Christian County's adult population were considered obese, and **28.7%** were considered physically inactive.<sup>4</sup>

## Our Solution

Provide hands-on, nutrition education to limited-resource audiences, focusing on:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

In 2019, 4,141 contacts were made with Christian County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN CHRISTIAN COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 98% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 75% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 87% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 93% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 84% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Tasting the Alphabet

According to Kentucky Health Facts, 71% of Christian County residents have a BMI in the overweight or obese categories, and only 9% of Christian County residents consume the recommended five vegetables/fruits per day. To address this, the Christian County agent for Family and Consumer Sciences joined the Hopkinsville Housing Authority to bring Tasting the Alphabet to their youth summer camp. The program was a success and extended throughout the school year during the youth after-school program. Each week, for 26 weeks, the FCS agent brought different produce for the children, starting with avocados and ending with zucchini. The purpose was to extend knowledge of different produce and expand their palates. The FCS agent asked during each lesson: What is it, fruit/vegetable? Where does it grow? When is it in season? What are the health benefits? What does it taste like? By the end of the series, the participants had tasted multiple new foods. All reported learning something new about each produce, and whether they had previously eaten it. At the conclusion of the series, all participants reported they were more excited about trying new foods and were more likely to ask their parents for fruits and vegetable.



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#### SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. World Health Organization Media Centre
3. The State of Obesity Report 2019
4. 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

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